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Research Guide Series

Intelligence

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Intelligence

A general definition of intelligence is that it involves the process of gathering and analysing information. Gathering intelligence, whether for military or other purposes, can be considered an important aspect of policy-making, as decisions are made based on information received from intelligence gatherers. Intelligence can be divided into several different types, including HUMINT, or human intelligence, where information is gained through observation, or working as a spy; IMINT, or imagery intelligence, which is use of photographic evidence; and SIGINT, or signal intelligence, which is information gained through enemy signals. SIGINT is considered to be the most important and reliable of the three methods, because it involves code-breaking, whereby the encrypted messages made by the enemy are analysed and solved. Alongside intelligence gathering within the military, UK intelligence organisations include MI5 (the Security Service), which traditionally deals with information and threats within the UK; MI6 (Secret Intelligence Service), which deals in foreign intelligence; and the Government Communication Headquarters (GCHQ), which provides SIGINT and protects UK communications from outside threats. The overarching aim and purpose of these organisations is to protect and defend the United Kingdom from threats through the use of intelligence. Intelligence is also an important aspect in the continuing global war on terror.

This bibliography has been designed to provide a guide as to where to find information on intelligence. Please note that the list of references below is a selection of the more relevant titles and information on the subject. The list is not intended to be exhaustive or definitive but is an introductory guide to some of the resources available.

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